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Communist China's General Purpose and Air Defense Forces

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COMMUNIST CHINA'S GENERAL PURPOSE AND AIR DEFENSE FORCES

THE PROBLEM

To assess the strength, capabilities, and disposition of the Chinese Communist general purpose and air defense forces with particular reference to the impact of domestic political developments and Sino-Soviet tensions.

CONCLUSIONS

A. Twenty years have now been expended in Communist China's effort to strengthen and modernize its armed forces. Peking's persistent willingness to allocate a large share of its resources to military purposes has yielded some creditable results. At the same time, however, the effort has been beset by difficulties caused by disruptive economic and political policies and by the ambivalence between Maoist military doctrine and the requirements for building a modern, professional military force.

B. The upheavals of the Cultural Revolution interferred with military training and degraded the combat capabilities and readiness of the Chinese Armed Forces. But the extent of this degradation and the degree of its persistence up to the present time is in dispute. CIA and INR believe that the level of training is still well short of normal in the army because of continued heavy involvement in non-military activities and that progress in extricating the People's Liberation Army (PLA) from these tasks will be slow. DIA and NSA, on the other hand, believe that training in the army approached normal levels in 1968 and that any residual degradation in combat readiness and effectiveness is slight. A discussion of the evidence on these points at issue is contained in paragraphs 12 to 17.

C. The deteriorating course of Sino-Soviet relations, which first deprived China of extensive military assistance and then in recent

years led to an omnious buildup of military forces and pressure against China, has added another dimension to China's defense problem. Although Peking's reaction has so far been cautious and limited in scope, the Soviet buildup is almost certainly having a major impact on Chinese military planning.

D. Despite its problems, the PLA has the capability for putting up a formidable defense of the mainland. Its principal strength lies in the size of the ground forces (about two and one-half million) and their fighting potential as an infantry force. Although China's military stance is basically defensive, its forces could overwhelm its neighbors in Southeast Asia or Korea if not opposed by a modern outside power; and, as it is demonstrating in Indochina, Peking can provide important assistance to insurgent groups across its southern borders.

E. In conventional combat against a modern opponent, however, each branch of the PLA would have critical weaknesses. Army units are believed to be seriously deficient in motorized transport and heavy armament; the air defense system probably lacks an adequate communications and data processing capability and could not withstand a large-scale, sophisticated air attack; and China's navy, while growing, is still little more than a coastal defense force.

F. As estimated, current and projected production programs will not, for many years, provide sufficient quantities of the various types of weapons and equipment needed to remedy materiel deficiencies and to raise the PLA to modern combat standards. But the Chinese are persevering—and almost certainly will continue to do so under any foreseeable leadership—with a fairly broad range of modernization programs along the following lines:

1. *Ground Forces.* Although the army is deficient in firepower and mobility and seems to have made less progress in modernization than might have been expected, the firepower of Chinese combat units is increasing. Already well supplied with small arms, ground units are receiving more tanks and artillery.

2. *Air Forces.* All elements of China's air defense apparently have been improved. Command and control capabilities have probably increased, more and better radars have been deployed at an increasing rate, and Mig-19 production probably has recovered from the Cultural Revolution. SAM deployment, however, has been proceeding slowly

and we are increasingly uncertain about Chinese plans for producing the Mig-21. There is some evidence that an aircraft of native design based on the Mig-19 has been produced in China.

3. *Naval Forces.* With few exceptions, naval shipbuilding programs appear to have recovered fully during 1969 from the Cultural Revolution, and current expansion of shipyards indicates that new programs could be planned. Greater emphasis is being placed on production of larger, longer range ships capable of extended patrols. Construction of R-class submarines now averages about two units a year, and China has begun to build destroyers. Old destroyers are being converted to carry cruise missiles.

DISCUSSION

1. Twenty years ago the lightly equipped People's Liberation Army (PLA) entered Korea and fought in its first and only war against a well-equipped modern force. Although Chinese leaders had reason to be satisfied with the resourcefulness and endurance of their army, at least some of them recognized that China's security and pretensions to a great power role required a substantial effort to strengthen and modernize its armed forces. Such an effort was initiated in the midst of the war and has continued to the present day.

2. The PLA has made impressive progress in some fields and it is today an organization of considerable size and defensive potential, with a capability to mount substantial offensive operations in the adjacent areas of Southeast Asia and Korea. Nonetheless, there are the striking facts that the PLA's overall progress has been somewhat limited and uneven and that much of its time and energy has been absorbed by political and economic functions.

3. In the broadest sense, the PLA's progress as a professional, modern force has been limited by the fundamental weaknesses of China's industry and technology. Beyond that, however, its development has been strongly shaped by Mao's tendency to give priority to the political role and mission of the army, by his concepts for the defense of China through the strategy of People's War, and by the consequences of his challenge to the leading role of the USSR.

4. The modernization of the PLA suffered its first major upset when Mao's 1958 Great Leap Forward brought on a collapse of industrial production in China. These difficulties were compounded by the withdrawal of Soviet military and economic assistance in 1960.

5. It was also at the turn of the decade that Lin Piao took over the leading military positions in both the party and the government, a move which ushered in a period of renewed efforts at political and ideological "rectification" of the PLA. Military production programs never lost their strong claim on resources, but the resurgence of the Maoist ideological approach to army building may

have caused some pulling and hauling over priorities, which in turn would help explain some of the anomalies which can be seen in China's military establishment today. In any case, the effort to politicize the military was intensified in the mid- and late-1960s and culminated in the official designation of Lin Piao as Mao's successor and the PLA's taking on a central role in the Cultural Revolution.

I. THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY AND THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Extent of the Involvement

6. The PLA's involvement in the political and social upheaval brought on by the Cultural Revolution in 1966 continues, and it has become increasingly apparent that this involvement was greater in the first two years or so than we earlier believed. As the authority of the party and government apparatus declined, the PLA was called upon first to maintain general order and stability, then to assume the role of peacemaker and arbiter between factional groups, and finally to assume leadership of the so-called Revolutionary Committees which now control government organizations, business and industrial enterprises, and schools throughout China. In the process the PLA acquired a wide variety of administrative, security, and propaganda functions which extended deeply into almost every aspect of Chinese society.

7. Over the past few years major elements of at least 15 of China's 34 armies were moved away from their home bases for reasons relating to the political problems or disturbances of the time. In most instances these moves were primarily rotational in nature and did not result in a net shift of forces. Most of these units remain in their new areas and some at least are widely dispersed carrying out political and administrative tasks. Simliar use is being made of many other PLA units which remain closer to their home garrisons. From 1967 to the present approximately 60 percent of Chinese ground force units have been identified as participating at one time or another in these non-military activities. The actual total may be considerably higher.

8. The PLA has been a victim as well as an instrument of the Cultural Revolution. The purge at the higher levels of the PLA was particularly heavy in the earlier stages. Some of those purged apparently favored constructing China's Armed Forces along conventional and professional lines, and ran afoul of Mao's idea of a highly politicized military establishment. Differences also developed over priorities and programs for developing China's economic and military strength, issues which had been exacerbated by the damaging effects of Mao's disastrous Great Leap Forward and his handling of Sino-Soviet relations. Other PLA figures seem to have been brought down as a result of factional struggles that developed in the course of the Cultural Revolution rather than because of past policy differences.

9. In any case, about half of the top military leadership was purged. The Military Affairs Committee, the highest official body responsible for military planning, lost almost half of its standing members and was reorganized. The

General Staff Department, which is responsible for coordinating combat operations, suffered a similar level of casualties. Commanders of the armored forces, the railway corps and apparently the artillery corps were purged, as were the political commissars of the air force, navy, and railway corps. The casualty list at the top was split about evenly between military professionals and political specialists.

10. There was also a heavy toll at the military region and military district levels. At these levels it was mostly political officers who fell. With a few notable exceptions, purges and factional activity were limited at the army level and below.

11. Nonetheless, the PLA has emerged as a more powerful political force despite the buffeting it has received. Nine of the 25 full and alternate members of the Politburo chosen at the Ninth Party Congress in April 1969 were PLA members. Military officers now are the top men or hold powerful positions in nearly all of the Revolutionary Committees governing China's major administrative areas. The military is prominent in municipal and county governments as well. In addition, the PLA is still the only effective nation-wide instrument of control available to Peking; as a result the PLA is playing a significant if not predominant role in the political reorganization and party rebuilding that is currently—but slowly—being carried forward. The PLA is thus in a strong position to expand its power at local levels and probably at the national level as well. Despite this enhanced political position, all the available evidence shows that regional commanders are responsive on military matters to national authorities.

Impact on Training and Morale

12. *Training.* As indicated above, a large number of army units have been identified with non-military activities. The key questions are, of course, the numbers of personnel from these units who were, and who continue to be, actively involved in such duties and the extent to which these personnel and their uninvolved comrades have participated in meaningful military training. The evidence on these points is neither clear nor firm and it is subject to widely ranging interpretation. These interpretations, in turn, are central to judgments concerning the current combat readiness and effectiveness of the PLA.

13. The basic problem is that our data base on training in the PLA has always been limited. In particular, we have never been able to follow the activities of a sufficient number of army units to establish the extent and nature of normal training patterns. This deficiency applies in some degree to all the services, but most severely to the army.

14. The major portion of evidence available consists of the following:

a. Testimony from individuals entering Hong Kong and letters from the China mainland which give a mixed picture of PLA activity:

b. A continuing mass of Chinese press and radio reporting detailing the involvement of Chinese Army units and individuals in propaganda and

political work, and in administrative tasks throughout the government, the economy, and the school system.

15. Logically, the growing Soviet threat should have brought a rapid withdrawal of PLA personnel from Cultural Revolution tasks at least in 1969, allowing the PLA to concentrate on combat readiness. DIA and NSA believe that the evidence on the resumption of training in 1968 indicates that this did happen, probably to a considerable extent. Moreover, DIA and NSA do not find propaganda references to PLA involvement in non-military activities to be persuasive evidence of the actual numbers of troops involved and the time expended in such activities.

16. All USIB members agree that training in the Chinese Air Force and Navy probably is at normal levels (which are low by US or Soviet standards). But the continued and constant references in the news media to army involvement in administrative and propaganda tasks lead CIA and INR to believe that the level of army training is still well short of normal.

17. These are differences of degree and they cannot be quantified in any meaningful way on the basis of present evidence. Thus, DIA and NSA emphasize indicators of the resumption of training; CIA and INR emphasize indicators of the continued involvement of the army in non-military activities.

18. *Morale.* Morale and discipline must have been adversely affected by the disruption and divisiveness that the Cultural Revolution brought to Chinese society as a whole. For a time PLA leaders appeared divided at various levels and its personnel were subjected to physical abuse from factional groups. Political attacks against many senior officers could only have added to the overall problem. To some extent morale probably continues to suffer. Although there has been time to repair the worst of the damage caused by the purge of national level military officials, PLA commanders down to the military region level are probably still operating in a tense and uncertain political environment. Top level civilian leaders are to a considerable degree still preoccupied with internal political problems. Due to this condition we believe that overall policy guidance and military planning is still subject to some uncertainty and delay.[1]

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[1] Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, notes that the last known major military purge occurred over two years ago and key military positions now appear to be filled by capable officers loyal to the central government. Under such circumstances, he believes it is reasonable to conclude that PLA officers are no longer operating under the abnormal stress and uncertainty which characterized the Cultural Revolution.

Although the government is undoubtedly concerned with internal political problems, the national defense programs described in Section II suggest that Chinese military planning is timely, purposeful, and has depth.

Vice Adm. Noel Gayler, the Director, National Security Agency; Maj. Gen. Joseph A. McChristian, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; Capt. William N. Hatch, for the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; and Brig. Gen. Edward Ratkovich, for the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, United States Air Force, also join in this footnote.

II. THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY TODAY

Disposition of Forces and Defensive Measures

19. From the outset, Chinese Communist military policy has been to provide first of all for the defense of the mainland. Until recent years, at least, Peking viewed the US as its principal enemy. The positioning of large ground forces opposite Taiwan and adjacent to Korea, and strenuous efforts to build up air defenses in east China and to develop a capability to defend coastal waters all reflect a concern about the potential of US military power.

20. US intervention in South Vietnam and the bombing of the North in 1965 caused Peking to emphasize the development of air defenses along the southern border and to strengthen naval forces in the area from Canton south. While there has been no significant strengthening of ground forces in south China, a variety of reports indicate that the Chinese are busy improving and expanding rail and road nets, and establishing military storage facilities in areas near the borders of North Vietnam, Laos, and to a lesser extent, Burma.

21. We are not certain what to make of this construction activity. Some of the road and rail work can be explained as necessary to economic development and political consolidation in the remote and sometimes turbulent border regions. The activity may also reflect a general concern for defense against foreign aggression, although it seems doubtful that Peking would expect more than minor harassments in this area. Some of the road construction does, however, lead to the borders of Laos and Burma—in the case of Laos, road construction continues across the border. These roads do, of course, enhance Chinese capabilities to support insurgency or to project their own forces into mainland Southeast Asia.

22. Since about 1965, the USSR has been steadily building up its military strength along the Sino-Soviet border. In the spring of 1969, serious border clashes occurred along the Ussuri River, and in the ensuing months there were further border incidents and Moscow mounted a psychological campaign that raised the specter of some sort of major Soviet attack against China. Consequently, Peking now regards the USSR as at least a coequal of the US as China's enemy. Indeed, the Chinese probably now view the Soviets as the more immediate and direct threat.

23. Although it is clear that Peking was aware of the Soviet buildup soon after it began, Chinese military reactions down to 1969, at least, were cautious and limited in scope. In 1968 they began to extend and improve their air defense warning system along their northern frontier, but not on a crash basis. There were no significant movements of major ground force units toward the Sino-Soviet frontier. In fact the major portion of two armies were moved out of Manchuria to deal with problems connected with the Cultural Revolution, and the vast areas of Sinkiang and Inner Mongolia continue to be very thinly manned with regular forces, despite a modest reinforcement of these areas.

24. Although the events of 1969 clearly heightened Peking's concern, Chinese military reaction apparently has continued to be cautious and primarily defensive in character. In 1969, Inner Mongolia was divided among the Shenyang, Peking and Lanchou Military Regions, an action which provides firmer command and control over the northern border area. Deployment of radars in the area has been increased. The reported increase in the level of training, particularly among air and naval units, is almost certainly linked with Sino-Soviet tensions. Along with these military preparations, Peking has begun a strident "war preparations" campaign which includes new efforts to increase industrial and agricultural production and to disperse population and small industrial plants—all longstanding goals of the regime. The campaign also includes a nation-wide program of air raid shelter construction and food storage for emergency use.

25. Apart from their purely military aspects, these actiyities clearly serve the regime's economic and social goals and help unify the country after a long period of internal turmoil. They also serve to put the Soviet Union on notice that China is prepared, if it must, to fight.

26. *Other Defensive Measures.* The Chinese have long had a program for placing some of their military and military related facilities underground. Some naval bases now under construction are being provided with underground facilities, some of which are reported to be protected berthings for submarines and smaller craft. Construction now underway at some airfields could provide underground hangers for part of China's jet fighter force.

27. A general pattern of digging in would make sense in terms of passive defense against air or naval bombardment, particularly in view of the vulnerabilities of China's active defenses against such attacks. The logic behind the construction of the huge earth-mounded structures, which have been reported in east China, is less obvious. A plausible explanation for these facilities is that they are designed to provide defensive strong points for important strategic and political centers. This function would fit with the extensive work being done to build cave and tunnel strong points along the coast where the terrain favors such defenses. But the tactical utility of the large mounds against a modern, mobile enemy invader is open to question and we are not yet confident that we understand the reasoning which lies behind their construction. Some measure of their importance to Peking is evident, however, in the sacrifice of good agricultural land in east China.

Manpower and Conscription

28. In 1969, Peking for the third time in four years altered the length of service for new recruits in the PLA. The terms of service in the army, navy and air force were increased to three, four and five years respectively. The return to longer terms of service probably reflects a desire to raise the level of skilled manpower in the services.

29. The PLA evidently assumed control over Public Security Forces in 1966, and in 1967 took over the paramilitary Production and Construction Corps (PCC). Subsequently some increased military training may have been conducted within these organizations, particularly among PCC units located in border areas. Over the last few years some additional but very basic training also may have been provided to certain militia units. While we doubt that this training has been sufficient to make these organizations effective front line adjuncts of the PLA, they do constitute a readily available source of organized manpower that could be used in defensive and delaying actions along the Soviet border.

Military Equipment Programs

30. The limitations of China's scientific, technical, managerial, and industrial capabilities and the disruptive effects of Maoist political and economic policies of the past decade are highly visible in the programs for production of conventional military hardware. In terms of design and development, the high priority given to nuclear weapons systems seems to have absorbed much of the available talent. With few exceptions, the Chinese appear to have done little original design work on conventional weapons. As a consequence, most of their production of military hardware is based on Soviet equipment and production technology acquired prior to 1960.

31. We see no early end to the bind on R&D resources despite the high priority on such resources that military programs will continue to enjoy. Some additional time may be necessary to overcome the adverse effects of factionalism and political disputes which good evidence shows developed during the Cultural Revolution in the National Defense Scientific and Technological Commission. In any event, there has been a four year disruption of scientific and technical education and there is yet no sign of a resumption of such education on a sound basis or a broad scale.

32. Military production, even where design and other technical problems have been solved, has in many cases fallen below levels that we would have considered desirable from Peking's point of view and within their capabilities. This has been due, in part, to the economic disruptions of the Great Leap 10 years ago and more recently to the Cultural Revolution. For example, it is believed that fighter aircraft production dropped significantly during 1967-1968, and various sources showed a decline in naval shipbuilding during the same period. Although there is little direct evidence, it is likely that some other types of military production also declined because of the Cultural Revolution.

33. The particular disruptions of the Cultural Revolution have now been largely overcome; indeed it appears that military production in 1970 on an overall basis will equal the previous high of 1966. Nonetheless, we do not yet see an end to the longstanding uneven pattern of military procurement. These patterns are not entirely explained by economic disruptions and we are somewhat puzzled by the ordering of priorities if, as we believe likely, resources and plant facilities

are at a premium. For example, the Chinese Army is being supplied with tanks from domestic production; but information at hand indicates that the army is receiving only a very few of the other types of vehicles and supporting equipment required by an armored force. China produces trucks; yet the army probably is woefully short of wheeled transport. No effort has yet been seen to produce a medium size transport aircraft which China badly needs, not only for domestic economic reasons, but also to support both air and ground operations. Construction of patrol vessels continues at a substantial rate at a time when the principal threat to China would seem to be overland from the USSR. In sum, we are not certain that a firm overall authority is providing continuous and coherent direction to China's military production program.[2]

The Chinese Communist Army

34. China's principal military strength still lies in the size of the army and its fighting potential as an infantry force. The numerical strength of the Chinese Communist Army (CCA) cannot be estimated with confidence on the basis of current data, but a figure of about two and one-half million is probably accurate within plus or minus 15 percent. This strength has not changed substantially over the past decade. The overall deployment of the army has also remained substantially the same with the bulk of the ground forces still deployed in a 150 mile-wide band extending from southern Manchuria southward along the coast to the borders of Vietnam.

35. Considering its importance, the CCA probably has made less progress in modernization than might have been expected.

[redacted]

F(b)(1)
F(b)(3)

[2] Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, believes it is imprudent to conclude that the cited examples in China's military procurement patterns reflect the absence of a firm overall authority in view of the intelligence community's admitted lack of information on Chinese strategic concepts and Peking's assessment of the threat. (See paragraph 1 of the Annex.) China's emphasis on air and coastal defense weapons appears consistent with her strategic situation.

Vice Adm. Noel Gayler, the Director, National Security Agency; Maj. Gen. Joseph A. McChristian, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; Capt. William N. Hatch, for the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; and Brig. Gen. Edward Ratkovich, for the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, United States Air Force, also join in this footnote.

[redacted] F(b)(1) F(b)(3)

36. In addition, the army's involvement in internal affairs raises serious questions concerning the ability of its commanders to assemble divisions quickly and coordinate their activities effectively. This factor and equipment deficiencies make it appear that the Chinese Army is much less a ready and effective force than we previously judged it to be and less able than we had thought to engage in conventional combat against modern opposition. Even though military training has moved forward in the past year, it still seems probable that the Chinese might encounter considerable difficulty in quickly projecting large forces toward suddenly threatened border areas or even of concentrating and maneuvering ground forces effectively within their own regional bases.[3]

37. Little effort seems to have been expended in developing more exotic equipment for the ground forces. Although the Chinese probably have the required skills and technology to develop a tactical ballistic missile, there is no information which indicates that the Chinese are working on such a system. This being the case, it is unlikely that the Chinese could deploy a tactical missile much before the mid-1970s, if indeed they have current plans to develop such a system. Even though a small chemical warfare research program apparently exists, there is no evidence that China has committed important resources to either a chemical or biological warfare program. Military training emphasizes the defensive aspects of chemical warfare.

Air and Air Defense Forces

38. All elements of China's air defense apparently have been improved during the past 18 months, and training activity probably increased somewhat during

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[3] Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, does not believe that the PLA's involvement in internal affairs at this time is so great as to significantly degrade its military effectiveness, as previously indicated in paragraph 15. Consequently, the PLA's nonmilitary activities are not considered a significant impediment to the assemblage and coordination of large numbers of ground forces.

[redacted] Chinese infantry divisions probably are seriously deficient in motor transport by Western standards and by the requirements of their estimated TO&Es. In actual practice, these deficiencies would be mitigated to a considerable degree by the employment of civilian transportation brigades and the capabilities of the army's independent motor transportation regiments, units not covered in the study. F(b)(1) F(b)(3)

Deficiencies in air transportation limit China's capabilities to effect rapid military buildup in remote areas. But in those areas where China would most likely assemble large numbers of units—rail and highway networks are adequate for the rapid execution of these buildups.

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1969. Radar production evidently has suffered little from the Cultural Revolution and more and better radars have been deployed at an increasing rate, extending and filling in high- and medium-altitude detection capabilities, particularly along China's northern border. It is probable that Mig-19 production has recovered from the Cultural Revolution and that a significant number were added to the operational force last year. Although it may increase somewhat during 1970, the overall rate of SAM deployment has been very low.

39. Despite these improvements, the air defense system still has a limited capability for detecting low-altitude penetrations. It is also believed to suffer from a serious communications and data processing deficiency. In the event of a large-scale air attack using ECM, this deficiency could be expected to severely degrade air situation reporting and fighter control. As the number of attacking aircraft increased, the system would rapidly become saturated and hence ineffective. Moreover, it is likely that only a few of the Mig-19s in China have an all-weather capability, and probably no more than 15 percent of China's total jet fighter force has such a capability. China's 1,000 Mig-19s have a low supersonic capability, but the handful of Mig-21s received from the Soviet Union are the only aircraft with more than a marginal capability for engaging other aircraft in supersonic flight.

40. Moreover, we are increasingly uncertain about Chinese plans for producing the Mig-21, but note that the Chinese have had eight years now to study, copy, or make design modifications to the Mig-21s given them by the Soviets. It would appear, therefore, that the Chinese either have experienced great difficulties in reproducing this aircraft (which appears to be the most likely case) or that they have decided to bypass the Mig-21 in the hopes of developing a more advanced interceptor of their own design. If the latter is the case, such an aircraft probably would not be available in quantity for at least five years.

41. There is some evidence that an aircraft of native design based on the Mig-19, has been produced in China. We are unable to predict whether such an aircraft might be used in an interceptor or ground attack role, or possibly both. In any event if this aircraft is in production, we believe it will be several years before it could be available in substantial numbers.

42. We now believe that production of the Soviet designed TU-16 jet medium bomber began at the Yenliang Airframe Plant about 1968. Some 10 bombers could have been produced by now. The production rate could increase gradually and reach a level of about 4 or 5 a month by late 1971. Initial operational deployment of this aircraft probably has begun. It is likely that the Chinese will consider the TU-16 primarily as a delivery vehicle for nuclear weapons.

43. Although little is known of the Chinese doctrine on AAA employment, they have a sizeable AAA force which has benefitted from combat experience in North Vietnam. This force seems to be deployed primarily in eastern China, extending from the North Korean border southward down the coast and along

the borders with countries in Southeast Asia. It is probably deployed in point defense and to protect selected target areas against attack. The Chinese AAA force will probably gain in effectiveness with deployment of additional weapons and continued training.

44. SAM units have been activated much more slowly than we expected and there are now about 25 units in the field. Deployments averaged about four per year during 1966-1969 and the deployment pattern now provides a better defense of a few important strategic targets. Nevertheless, the SA-2 force will not add significantly to China's overall air defense capability for some time to come. SAMs and AAA if located together would maximize the effectiveness of these air defense weapon systems.

45. There has been no significant change in the tactical strike and air support capabilities of the Chinese Communist Air Force for many years. IL-28s are still the only jet bombers which the Chinese have in any quantity (about 300) and their few ground attack fighter divisions are equipped with Mig-15/Mig-17/IL-10s. Purchases of transport aircraft from the USSR have only marginally improved the airlift and airborne assault capability, and any improvement over the next few years is likely to depend almost entirely on such purchases. The Chinese probably have only a limited capability for the employment of ECM in support of offensive missions.

Naval Forces

46. The composition, deployment, and operations of the Chinese Communist naval forces all indicate that their primary mission continues to be coastal defense. Although naval strength is increasing, the navy is now capable only of providing adequate defense against small surface forces intruding into coastal waters. Its antisubmarine warfare (ASW) capability is minimal by modern standards and limited to areas adjacent to naval bases where surface ships are readily available. Virtually no priority has yet been given to improving the capabilities of the naval air force or to construction of ships which would improve China's very limited seagoing amphibious capability.

47. With few exceptions, naval shipbuilding programs probably recovered fully during 1969 from the Cultural Revolution. Coastal patrol craft, including missile boats, are being turned out at an increasing rate. Construction of R-class submarines now average about two units a year and an additional shipyard probably has begun submarine construction. Old destroyers received years ago from the USSR are being converted to carry cruise missiles. China has also begun to build a new class of destroyer which may be based on a modified design of the Soviet Kotlin. Particularly in view of the conversion of the older destroyers, we think it likely these new ships will also be equipped with cruise missiles. It appears that a greater emphasis is now being placed on programs which will provide larger, longer range ships capable of extended patrols. In addition, shipyard expansion currently under way indicates that the Chinese may be planning additional naval programs.

48. The Chinese coastal defense cruise missile program has developed very slowly. Two SAMLET sites were constructed in the early 1960s at opposite sides of the entrance to the Po Hai Gulf. No additional sites have been identified and there is no evidence which indicates that this weapon has been deployed at any of the many coastal defense sites which have been observed. It is possible, therefore, that the Chinese have been working on an alternative system, perhaps a modification of the styx cruise missile which they are currently producing.

III. OUTLOOK

Combat Readiness and Capabilities

49. As indicated above, the Cultural Revolution degraded Chinese military capabilities in terms of readiness, morale and discipline. The resumption of training on a more regular scale which we believe occurred in mid-1968 probably served to overcome some of these deficiencies. This progress should continue if the current mood of moderation in Peking persists during the months ahead. But the process of extricating the PLA, particularly the army, from its involvement in non-military activities will be difficult and slow, especially since Peking continues to be beset by political problems and is making only very slow progress in rebuilding the party and in accomplishing other organizational reforms. Heightened tensions between China and the Soviet Union during the past year seem to have had some sobering influence on Peking, but not enough to jolt the Chinese leadership into any crash effort to improve the army's combat readiness. Thus, though developments seem to be tending toward returning the entire PLA to a more normal footing, much of the time and energy, at least of army personnel, is likely to continue to be diverted by non-military activity and political stress for the next few years.[4]

50. Projected production programs will not, for many years, provide sufficient quantities of the various types of weapons and equipment needed to remedy serious materiel deficiencies and to raise the PLA to modern combat standards. As the process of modernization goes forward, the Chinese will face steeply rising economic costs. Not only will outlays for equipment increase, but as more equipment reaches the field, operations and maintenance costs will go up. Furthermore, although industrial production seems to be recovering from the

[4] Lt. Gen. Donald V. Bennett, the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency, believes that the resumption of training in 1968 has allowed sufficient time to overcome most of the Cultural Revolution-inspired deficiencies in readiness, morale and training. Moreover, it is his opinion that the PLA's normal posture involves a considerable expenditure of time and energy in non-military activities, but the involvement is not expected to substantially impair combat readiness in the future.

Vice Adm. Noel Gayler, the Director, National Security Agency; Maj. Gen. Joseph A. McChristian, the Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; Capt. William N. Hatch, for the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Intelligence), Department of the Navy; and Brig. Gen. Edward Ratkovich, for the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, United States Air Force, also join in this footnote.

disruption inflicted by the Cultural Revolution, the prospects for vigorous expansion and growth are not bright. And as the Chinese attempt to move ahead with original weapons R&D there will be a further stretching of scarce scientific and technical resources. The army will continue to be deficient in firepower and mobility at least through 1975. Nor will China be able to develop within that time frame an air defense system that would be able to cope with a major air attack. Naval construction programs, although they will provide more and better ships in the future, cannot soon be sufficient to alter the fact that the navy has the capability only for coastal defense against small intruding surface forces and an ASW capability only in the vicinity of naval bases.

51. Despite these important weaknesses and short-comings, the PLA has a substantial defensive capability. This strength together with the sheer vastness of China's population and territory would make a ground war against China a most formidable proposition even for a great power. The PLA could easily handle any situation likely to arise on the Sino-Indian frontier or anything the Chinese Nationalists, unassisted, could mount against the mainland. And, of course, the Chinese could overrun their neighbors in Southeast Asia or Korea in a conventional attack if not faced with opposition from a modern outside power. Moreover, as it is demonstrating in Indochina and with its logistical preparations in south China, Peking is in an excellent position to meddle in insurgencies and unsettled situations across its southern border.

Policy, Doctrine, and Strategy

52. Chinese military programs and force dispositions continue to reflect an overriding concern for defense. Even their emerging nuclear capability would fit into this generally defensive posture, when viewed as a deterrent against any potential enemy. Maoist military doctrine teaches respect for the enemy and the need to avoid direct encounters with superior forces; this basic caution continues to guide Chinese military policies today.

53. Political uncertainties in China and Sino-Soviet tension, however, greatly complicate the process of making judgments regarding future decisions in Peking on military policy. One thing that seems almost certain is that the military sector will retain its high priority in the allocation of resources. But, as we indicated above, the Chinese have a long way to go in filling out and modernizing the equipment of the general purpose and air defense forces, and only gradual improvement across the wide range of requirements will be possible. Competition from strategic missile and nuclear weapon programs, which have the highest priority of all, adds to the problem.

54. Mao, though he concedes the need for modern equipment and for developing military skills, is clearly more interested in the continuing politicization of the PLA and in using it as the exempler and instrument for bringing about the ideological remodeling he seeks for all of Chinese society. Military professionals, on the other hand, are likely to be more concerned with correcting China's military weaknesses and dealing with China's many pressing practical problems.

While it is evident that the PLA has enhanced its position for influencing national policy, the extent to which its representatives are willing—or dare—to exert this influence is not so clear. About all that can be said with much confidence is that the designing of policies and programs for building and training a modern, professional military establishment will be difficult as long as Mao is on the scene.

55. Sino-Soviet antagonism should provide the PLA with a powerful argument for its case in general. It could also lead to revisions in Peking's set of military priorities—for example, improving the equipment and firepower of the ground forces might get more attention, while naval programs might be curtailed. The chances of such a shift might increase if Peking also saw the US as altering its stance in Asia. But this is only speculation, and it is equally possible that Peking, caught up in its own internal problems, does not yet see its way clearly for devising new policies.

56. The basic restraint and caution Peking seems to be showing in the face of the Soviet buildup on the border probably reflects a concern not to make military movements on a scale that might provoke or alarm the Soviets. Probably a more important reason the Chinese have not made important ground force deployments in the border areas is simply that they are making a virtue of necessity; the Chinese do not intend to push their armies up to the border where the Soviet forces would have the shorter lines of communications and could use their immense superiority in firepower and mobility to the greatest advantage. In the case of a Soviet cross border probe, the Chinese probably would react with whatever forces were locally available, but would not be easily provoked into sending large reinforcements to the frontier. In the event of a large-scale invasion attempt by the USSR, Chinese strategy appears to call for harassing and delaying actions and even of putting up a strenuous defense of selected strategic areas. In the main, however, the Chinese still appear to be willing to give up territory if necessary and to wage a Maoist Peoples War deep in China.

57. It should be stressed, however, that Chinese concerns and preparations are not focused only against the Soviets. Military forces, especially air, have been strengthened in the southern border areas, and defensive positions have been constructed there and along China's coastline as well. Peking's propaganda tells the Chinese people to prepare against attack not only from the USSR but also from the US.

ANNEX

STATUS OF FORCES AND TRENDS

Introduction

1. For a number of reasons we know considerably less about the doctrine, strategy, tactics, training, and capabilities of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) than we do about those of the Soviet Armed Forces. We have had ample opportunity to observe Soviet units in Eastern Europe and evaluate at first hand their activities, equipment levels, readiness posture, and so on. On occasion, it has even been possible to observe military units active inside the USSR itself. The Soviets have also conducted several large-scale military exercises which have enabled us to get a better feeling for their overall capabilities and the application of their doctrine and strategy. Conversely, the Chinese have made it extremely difficult for a foreigner to get anything but a superficial glimpse of the PLA, and there is little evidence from which to derive judgments relative to strategy, tactics, or actual combat capabilities.

2. The Soviet Union has permitted publication of a large amount of material dealing with military doctrine and strategy. China, on the other hand, has published very little on this subject. In addition, there has been some penetration into high military levels in the Soviet Union and acquisition of documents such as the Penkovsky papers have provided considerable information.

3. Finally, the Soviet Armed Forces, because they constitute a greater threat to the US, have had first claim on US analytical assets. A thorough analytical effort has only begun to be applied to Chinese ground force units and it will be some time before we are as confident of our judgments about many aspects of the Chinese Communist Army (CCA) as we now are about similar aspects of the Red Army.

The High Command

4. The Ministry of National Defense (MND), under the policy control of the Military Affairs Committee of the Party Central Committee, is the senior military authority. The chief staff components of the MND are its three general departments: the General Staff Department, the General Political Department, and the General Rear Services Department. Most combat arms and services, such as the air force, navy, armor, artillery, and selected supporting organizations, are represented at the MND level by separate headquarters. However, there is no separate headquarters for the infantry forces, which are apparently controlled directly by the MND.

5. For administrative purposes, mainland China is divided into military regions which are divided into subordinate districts. The number of Military Regions has recently been reduced from 13 to 12 or possibly 11. The Inner Mongolia Military Region has been divided among the Shenyang, Peking, and Lanchou Regions. Though the evidence is less clear, the Tibet Military Region may have been subordinated to the Chengtu Military Region. These are territorial rather than operational commands and in most cases conform to provincial boundaries.

Army

6. The main field command organization of the CCA, is the army, of which there are some 34. There is nothing in the CCA analogous to the Soviet combined arms or tank armies. A typical Chinese army at full strength would include 3 infantry divisions, 1 artillery regiment, and 1 anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) regiment and would number about 50,000. In addition to units subordinate to army headquarters, there are a number of separate combat, combat service, and service support units assigned to the headquarters of military regions.

7. We estimate that at full strength the standard infantry division would number about 14,000 officers and men. Its principal combat elements would be 3 infantry regiments; 1 artillery regiment and 1 tank/assault gun regiment. In addition to the standard infantry division, the Chinese have light divisions for use in mountainous and other difficult terrain. These type units are similar to the standard division but do not have the tank/assault gun regiment, are equipped with lighter artillery, and have less organic vehicular transport.

8. Continuing analysis has strengthened our confidence that the CCA has some 143 combat divisions (109 infantry, 23 border defense/military internal security, 3 airborne, 5 armored, and 3 cavalry). At the regimental level, however, analysis has always been more problematical. As a result, we cannot estimate with high confidence the strength of the CCA. We believe, however, that a figure of two and one-half million is probably accurate within plus or minus 15 percent. (See TABLE I.)

9. [redacted]

F(b)(1)
F(b)(3)

TABLE I

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF ARMY UNITS AND OVERALL STRENGTH AS OF MAY 1970

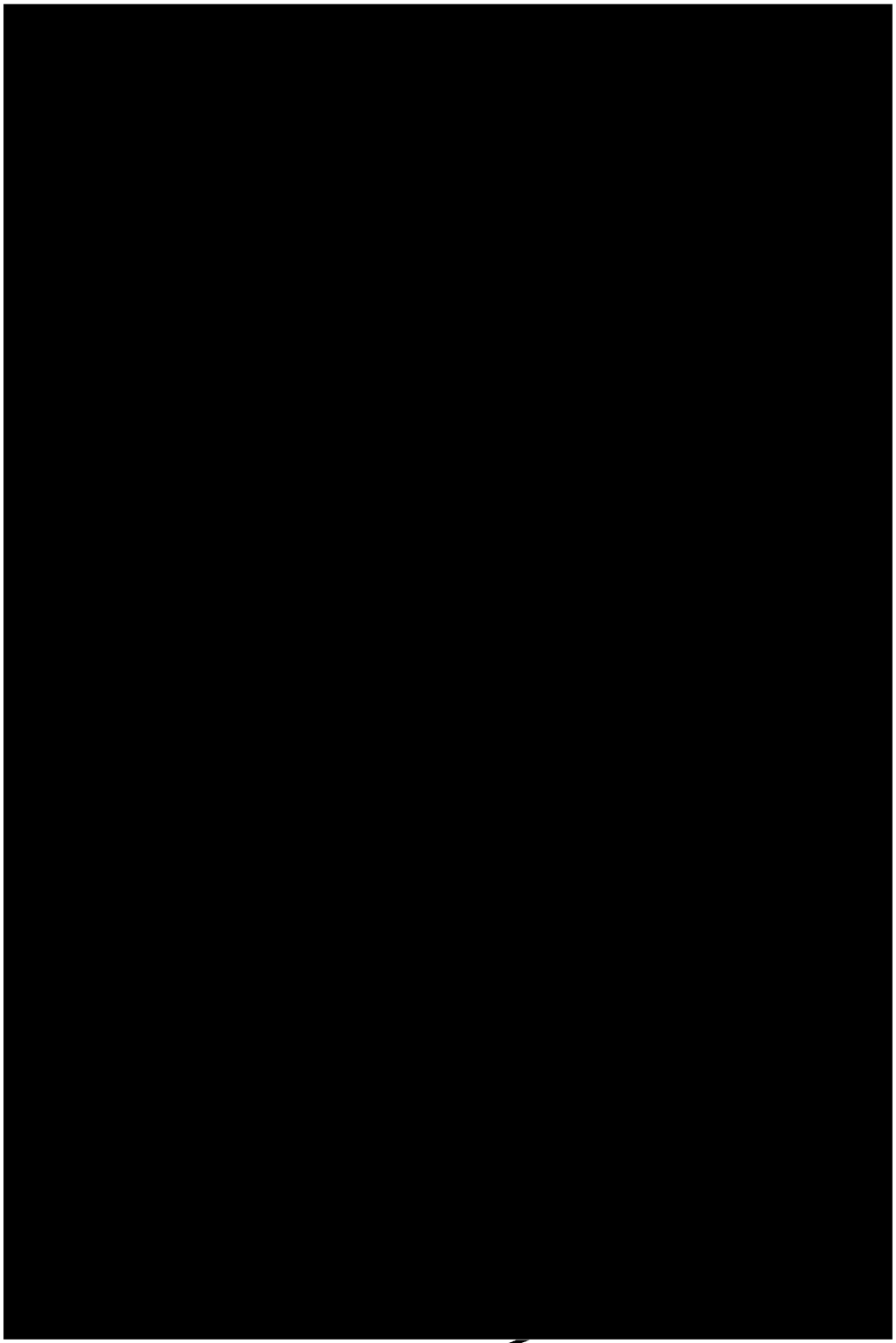
Army Headquarters		34
Combat Divisions		143
109 Infantry		
23 BD/MIS Divisions		
3 Airborne [a]		
5 Armored		
3 Cavalry		
Combat Support Divisions		24
15 Field Artillery		
3 Antitank		
6 AAA		
Service Support Divisions		11
11 Railway Engineer		
Combat Regiments (Independent)		53
2 Infantry		
38 BD/MIS		
8 Tank		
5 Cavalry		
Combat Support Regiments (Independent)		52
11 Field Artillery	27 Engineer	
4 Rocket Launcher	8 Signal	
1 AAA	1 Anti-CW	
Organic to Military Region or Army Headquarters		23
15 Field Artillery		
8 AAA		
Service Support Regiments (Independent)		34
33 Motor Transport		
1 Railway Engineer		
TOTAL STRENGTH IN PERSONNEL: Approximately 2½ million [b]		

[a] Subordinate to the CCAF, but for the purpose of this paper included with the CCA.

[b] This figure could vary by ±15 percent. A gradual increase is expected as a result of verifying units already in existence and identifying a limited number of newly formed ones.

[redacted]

F(b)(1)
F(b)(3)



F(b)(1)
F(b)(3)

F(b)(1)
F(b)(3)

Air Support and Airborne Assault Capabilities

10. The Chinese have no separate tactical air command, and we have no information concerning PLA doctrine on the use of aircraft in a close support role. At present any tactical strike or ground support mission would fall principally on the 300 or so IL-28s in the Chinese Communist Air Force (CCAF) and Chinese Communist Naval Air Force (CCNAF), and the few fighter divisions in the CCAF, which have ground attack as their primary mission. The remainder of the operational fighter force is assigned to air defense, with ground attack as a secondary role.

11. The Chinese have an extremely limited airborne assault capability. The principal limitation on the employment of Chinese airborne forces is the small size of the Chinese air transport fleet which consists largely of light transports and a few medium transports. The medium transports include 14 AN-12/Cubs purchased from the Soviet Union, which are the only rear extraction aircraft in the Chinese inventory. Five AN-24/Coke light transports, purchased from the USSR constitute the only notable addition to the inventory in the last 2 years. We have no evidence that the Chinese are preparing to produce a medium or heavy transport. During peacetime and for a period of no more than 7 days, the maximum daily total long-range (2,000 n.m.) airlift capability of the Chinese military transport force augmented by 50 percent of the civil air fleet is estimated to be about 1,900 fully supplied and equipped troops. For supplies only, the theoretical daily maximum is about 355 tons. Similarly calculated, the daily short-range (500 n.m.) lift capability is estimated to be about 13,000 fully equipped and supplied troops or 2,400 tons of supplies alone. It is unlikely, however, that this optimum capability could be achieved.

Air Force

12. The CCAF exercises its administrative and operational control through 10 tactical air districts and a limited number of air elements assigned directly to Headquarters CCAF. Although there is no "Air Defense Command" in the

US or Soviet sense, a staff element of CCAF Headquarters coordinates and controls all air defense operations, including those involving air control and warning, AAA, SAMs, and fighters supplied from the CCAF and CCNAF.

13. The CCAF and CCNAF, number approximately 300,000 men and are equipped with some 4,300 aircraft of which about 700 are subordinate to the CCNAF. (See TABLE II for estimated numbers of military aircraft in operational units.) The largest active operational unit in the CCAF is the Air Division, with each division consisting of 2 to 3 regiments.

14. The present strength of the jet light bomber force is approximately 300. The number of sorties flown per month by the average IL-28 pilot is probably adequate to maintain proficiency. Moreover, the fact that many pilots have been flying these same aircraft for up to 10 years would probably provide the bomber force with sufficient experience to conduct medium- or low-altitude bombing missions. At least half of the force is probably equipped for radar bombing.

15. The strength of the fighter force is estimated to have increased by about 300 aircraft during the past 18 months. This increase is based upon continuing production of Mig-19s. The force size will continue to increase as more Mig-19s are produced since the phasing out of the older Mig-15s and Mig-17s probably is proceeding slowly. IL-28 regiments currently have about 18 aircraft per unit and fighter regiments about 26 aircraft.

TABLE II

ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT IN OPERATIONAL UNITS (1970-1972)

	1 July 1970			1 July 1972
	CCAF	CCNAF	Totals	Totals
Fighters				
Mig-15/Mig-17 Fagot/Fresco	1,700	300	2,000	1,700–1,900
Mig-19/Farmer	800	200	1,000	1,300–1,500
Mig-21/Fishbed *	25	0	25	—
Bombers				
TU-2/Bat	90	20	110	40–60
IL-28/Beagle	170	125	295	250–300
TU-4/Bull	12	0	12	8–12
TU-16/Badger	12	0	12	60–100
Transport				
Medium	26	0	26	30–40
Light	420	50	470	475–500
Reconnaissance				
BE-6/Madge	0	5	5	4–5
Helicopters				
MI-4/Hound	275	25	300	375–400
Alouette III	10	0	10	8–12

* Because of uncertainties concerning the Mig-21 program no projection is made for 1972.

16. Although information is limited, we estimate that no more than 15 percent of China's fighter force is equipped with airborne intercept equipment. The large majority of these are Mig-17s. The Soviets may have provided the Chinese with a limited number of heat-seeking (AA-2) type AAMs when they delivered the Mig-21s, and the Chinese possibly are producing some of these missiles and perhaps beam-rider missiles as well.

17. The extensive air surveillance and control network is comprised of some 750 radar sites with about 1,500 radars. Since 1967 the deployment of new radars (including some new models of Chinese design) has increased. Qualitative improvement of China's air defense radar network probably will continue to enjoy a high priority.

18. Although radar deployment generally was widely dispersed, during 1968 and 1969 a buildup of new radars probably occurred in areas adjacent to the Sino-Soviet and Sino-Mongolian borders. The net effect of this buildup would be to provide considerably increased long-range high- and medium-altitude early warning and ground control intercept coverage in northern China. Radar coverage probably was also increased about strategic areas throughout China. Despite the recent improvements, China's air defense radar network continues to have significant weaknesses. It apparently lacks an operational advanced data transmission system and thus would have to rely upon manual morse and voice techniques. Low altitude and surface search coverage remain far from adequate, and defense against electronic countermeasures still is limited.

19. The anti-aircraft forces include about 20 air force AAA divisions and 7 or 8 army AAA divisions which are more lightly gunned. These AAA divisions are operationally subordinate to the CCAF District Headquarters in the area in which they are located. AAA defenses are distributed along the entire East Coast from Hainan Island to the Korean border, and heavy concentrations of AAA defend important coastal airfields opposite Taiwan. Other significant AAA defenses are located near the North Vietnamese border. Selected airfields, urban complexes, military installations, and production areas throughout China can also be expected to be defended by these weapons.

20. In addition to their conventional AAA, the Chinese have a limited SAM capability. The Chinese practice of moving units about makes it difficult to determine the size of the force, but we believe there are about 25 SAM battalions currently in the field. There should also be additional SAM equipment in R&D or training facilities. Production and deployment rates have remained low since the inception of the program—about 4 units per year. Whether the Chinese intend to step up the pace of SAM deployment depends in part on their evaluation of the present equipment. It is possible that they are working on further refinements or improvements in the system. In any event, it seems likely that the SAM force will fall well short of 100 units in 1975, and the air defense system will continue to rely primarily on fighter aircraft.

21. The emphasis in SAM deployment is believed to have shifted from anti-reconnaissance to defense of strategic targets. Most of the new battalions de-

ployed since 1967 have been added to key areas that already had some SAM protection. Nevertheless, some percentage of the SAM force will continue to be kept relatively mobile in an effort to interdict and deter aerial reconnaissance and the intrusion of other aircraft.

Navy

22. Administrative and operational control over the naval forces is exercised through the headquarters of the Chinese Communist Navy (CCN) located in Peking. Orders from the Minister of Defense are passed to the navy's commander in chief via the General Staff. Three fleet area commands are directly subordinate to naval headquarters: the North Sea Fleet, with headquarters in Tsingtao; the East Sea Fleet, with headquarters in Shanghai; and the South Sea Fleet, with headquarters in Chan-chiang (Fort Bayard). Immediately subordinate to the three fleet headquarters are district and sector headquarters which are responsible for their respective segments of the coastal area.

23. The CCN now includes 38 submarines, 4 destroyers, 9 destroyer escorts, about 70 hydrofoil motor torpedo boats, 17 guided missile patrol boats and about 600 other patrol craft. Personnel strength is estimated at about 180,000 men, of which some 23,000 are in the naval air force. (See TABLE III for estimated numbers of naval combatants and support ships.)

24. Over the past year or so, the most significant changes in the composition of the Chinese naval forces have been the equipping of destroyers in the North Sea Fleet with missile launchers and the addition of three R-class submarines to the East Sea Fleet. The South Sea Fleet was further strengthened by the addition of a fourth Kiangnan-class destroyer escort, but compared with the North and East Sea Fleets, it continues to be weak in patrol escorts and does not yet have any submarines. There is evidence, however, of continuing efforts to equalize fleet strengths, including the number of submarines assigned to each.

25. Construction and expansion of naval facilities and shipyards continues, especially in the East and South Sea Fleet areas.

26. The CCN sea lift capability remains negligible. Only about two plus infantry divisions (33,000 troops) or one infantry and one artillery division (20,000 troops) could be transported at any given time and amphibious training receives little attention. In port-to-port operations, passenger ships of the merchant fleet could deliver up to 58,000 troops. There are some 200 ocean-going cargo ships, some of which probably could be employed in transporting troops or supplies. In addition, in operations where the use of smaller ships and craft is feasible, the Chinese could employ literally thousands of junks for transporting troops and light equipment. The amphibious force is aging and replacement will soon be required if the present capability is to be maintained.

27. The CCNAF is predominantly an air defense force. It includes at least 15 fighter regiments (Mig-15/Mig-17/Mig-19) of about 30 fighters each, and approximately 7 jet light bomber regiments (IL-28) of 16 to 25 aircraft each. Some

of the IL-28s are used in a reconnaissance role. Naval operational fighters are primarily assigned to air defense. Although administratively controlled by CCNAF headquarters at Peking through the fleet headquarters, in their air defense role fighter units are operationally controlled by the CCAF. The bomber regiments are used for patrol and bombing activities in coastal areas and are controlled by the fleet headquarters. At least 4 of the IL-28 regiments have a limited torpedo attack capability.

TABLE III

NAVAL COMBATANTS AND SUPPORT SHIPS

	Estimated inventory	
	April 1970	Mid-1972
Principal Combatants		
Guided Missile Destroyer (DDGS-SSM only)	1	4
Destroyer (DD)	3	1[a]
Destroyer Escort (DE)	9	9
Ballistic Missile Submarine (SSB)	1	1
Submarine (SS)	37[b]	40–44
Patrol Boats		
Patrol Escort (PF)	15	15
Submarine Chaser (PC)	27	34–36
Guided Missile Patrol Boat (PTG/PTFG)	17	30–32
Motor Gunboat (PGM/PGH)	375[c]	420–430
Torpedo Boat (PT/PTH)	225[c]	270–280
Minesweepers		
Fleet (MSF)	23	28–30
Coastal (MSC/MSM)	5	5
Auxiliary (MSA)	60	80–100
Amphibious Ships and Craft		
Landing Ships (LST/LSM/LSIL)	35	36–38
Landing Craft (LCU/LCM/LCT)	380	460–480
Auxiliaries		
Cargo Ship (AK/AKL)	20	25–30
Liquid Carriers (AO/AOL/AW)	31	35–40
Ocean Tug (ATA)	34	40–50
Repair and Salvage (ARL/ARS)	14	15–20
Submarine Auxiliaries (ASL/ASR)	3	3–5
Other (ADG/AG/AGB/AGL/AGS/ANL)	85	100–110
Service Craft	650	700–725

[a] This unit represents new construction and may eventually be missile-equipped.

[b] Including 9 R-class, 21 W-class, 4 S-1-class, and 3 M/V-class.

[c] About 70 torpedo boats and 3 gunboats are equipped with hydrofoils.